



Simply Nutritious, Quick and Delicious

Are Food Vacuum Sealers Safe?

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[Jenna Smith](#)

Did Santa bring you a food vacuum sealer for Christmas? While probably not on everyone's wish list, many people love the advantages of a food vacuum sealer. Home vacuum sealers are small appliances that remove oxygen from the package of food before sealing, which can increase storage time, preserve the flavor and color and reduce food waste. However, there are risks with vacuum sealed foods, making it important to be "in-the-know" before vacuum sealing or using vacuum sealed products.

Removing oxygen doesn't eliminate the risk of bacterial growth. While it may limit some bacteria, which spoil food and causes noticeable changes, such as mold or sliminess, it may actually increase the risk of pathogenic bacteria, which causes foodborne illness and generally does not cause noticeable changes to the food. *Clostridium botulinum*, for instance, is a potentially deadly bacterium that prefers to grow in an environment without oxygen, meaning food that is vacuum sealed can be a growing ground for this dangerous toxin.

Avoid the risks related to vacuum sealed foods by keeping these foods in the refrigerator or freezer. Vacuum sealers are not to replace home canning in a boiling water bath or pressure canner. Dry foods, like nuts or crackers are the only vacuum sealed foods that can be stored at room temperature. In addition, be sure to thaw foods out of the vacuum package and in the refrigerator. This includes frozen fish or chicken that you may buy at the store. Seal it sa' with your vacuum sealer!

Simple Salmon Sliders ([Printable PDF](#))

12 oz. skinless salmon fillet, cut into 1-inch cubes

Zest of ½ lime

1 Tablespoon Dijon mustard

½ teaspoon grated fresh ginger

1 Tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro

1 teaspoon low-sodium soy sauce

Salt and pepper, to taste

6 whole wheat slider buns

Spray grill with non-stick cooking spray. Heat grill to medium heat. In a food processor, coarsely grind salmon cubes, lime peel zest, mustard, ginger, cilantro, low-sodium soy sauce, and salt and pepper if desired. Using clean hands, form mixture into 3 salmon patties. Grill (or cook in a skillet) on medium heat for 4 minutes on each side or until it reaches 145°F. Top with vegetables, mango salsa, grilled pineapple rings, avocado, goat cheese, or a tartar sauce and serve on a whole wheat bun.

Yield: 3 servings, 2 sliders each

Nutrition Facts (per serving): *310 calories, 13 grams fat, 380 milligrams sodium, 21 grams carbohydrate, 4 grams fiber, 27 grams protein*